Statement on the sustainable development agenda item in the Second Committee
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4 November 2013

Mr. Chair,
Distinguished delegates,
Colleagues,

I am honored to be speaking to the Second Committee.

This Committee is a critical part of the UN intergovernmental architecture for development.

Just over a month ago, at the special event on MDGs, your Heads of State and Government decided to start intergovernmental negotiations to elaborate the post-2015 development agenda.

The resolutions and decisions that you are going to adopt this year in the Committee are of special importance for the elaboration of this new development agenda.

Today’s agenda item on sustainable development is also of particular importance at a time when so much of what we do relates to the follow-up to Rio+20.

I will introduce nine reports of the Secretary-General today. All are part of the broader picture that we are trying to put together with the post-2015 development agenda.

The first report is on the Implementation of Agenda 21, Rio+20 and other UN conferences on Sustainable Development (A/68/321). It takes stock of all the follow-up processes to Rio+20. These include the Open working group on SDGs, the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the GA Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing. The report also touches on processes on facilitating clean and environmentally sound technologies, on sustainable consumption and production, on strengthening the interface between science and policy - including through a global sustainable development report, as well as on partnerships and voluntary commitments. It looks at coherence and
coordination among these processes in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. And it gives recommendations how to strengthen the high-level political forum so that it promotes a coherent implementation of sustainable development commitments in the post-2015 development agenda.

The second report is on options for facilitating the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies (A/68/310). This report builds on last year’s report on this topic, as well as on the deliberations at the workshops convened by the President of the Assembly in April and May 2013. It also draws from the written inputs we received from Member States and the United Nations system. The MDG special event of the GA recommended that the process to develop options for a technology facilitation mechanism complete its work by September 2014. It is therefore, very important for you to look at the various options and recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General. The report proposes inter alia that regular dialogues be held within the UN system on assessments of technology needs of developing countries and how best to meet them, possibly under the auspices of the high-level political forum. The report refers to a technology bank for least developed countries which is elaborated in a separate report.

The third report I wanted to introduce is on Agricultural technology for development (A/68/308). This is a biannual report. It elaborates on the key role of agricultural technology in freeing humanity from poverty and hunger. Access to capital-intensive technologies is unevenly spread, especially across developing countries. The capacities related to knowledge-intensive technologies need to be augmented. To respond to this challenge, agricultural practices must be sustainable, resilient, accessible and beneficial for the most vulnerable people, including women and men smallholder farmers. It is essential to develop improved and innovative approaches to the development, transfer and dissemination of such practices. A new paradigm for agriculture will require smallholders to be at the centre of innovation systems. They should help to shape the agenda for research and development and extension services. Only this way can we give adequate attention to the crops, fish and livestock products that matter to them as producers and consumers.

The fourth report is on the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (A/68/309). The 2014-2024 United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All offers a timely and unique opportunity for all actors to rally around a common platform to move the world towards sustainable energy for all. A range of actors have started to work with the
UN towards a more coordinated global plan of action. This plan will promote complementarity and synergies among the various activities. The programme of the Decade will also focus on those synergies related to the strong nexus that exists between energy and other development factors including water, food, health, education, gender and poverty.

The fifth report looks at Mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/68/790). It analyses how the United Nations system is progressing in mainstreaming the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in its work, as mandated at Rio+20. The report makes the case that integrating these three dimensions more systematically will allow the United Nations system to better support Member States in implementing the United Nations post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals. It enumerates a number of building blocks for this integration. These include commitment at the highest level of the UN system bolstered by clear and coherent intergovernmental guidance as well as stronger coordination, policy coherence, accountability and transparency, including broad stakeholder engagement. Also critical are building analytical capacities, developing new competencies and tools to support developing countries, as well as mobilizing and allocating resources to drive sustainable development.

The sixth report is on Intergenerational solidarity and the needs of future generations (A/68/322). This report shows that the issue of intergenerational solidarity is embedded in the concept of sustainable development and in existing treaties, declarations, resolutions and intergovernmental decisions. It also reviews how this issue has been taken into consideration in policymaking in a variety of institutions at the national level. The report outlines possible models to institutionalize concern for future generations at the UN including by nominating a high commissioner or a special envoy. It suggests that the high-level political forum consider this and other suitable mechanisms at its second meeting in 2014.

The seventh report addresses the follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/68/316). It shows examples of initiatives to accelerate national and regional implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy including by the UN system and regional and international organizations. It also summarizes
the preparations for the Third International Conference on SIDS that will take place in September next year in Samoa. Regional meetings have been held. The interregional meeting held in Barbados adopted an important outcome document. It is now for you to elaborate further the modalities of the Conference and its preparations.

The eighth report is on Harmony with Nature (A/68/325). It draws from an interactive dialogue convened by the GA President during the 67th session to examine different economic approaches in the context of sustainable development. The ultimate purpose is to strengthen the ethical basis for the relationship between humanity and the Earth. It has been widely recognized that, in order to achieve a balance between the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations, it is necessary to foster a universal respect for the Earth system and its species. We must also accept our responsibility to restore the health and integrity of the planet’s ecosystems. Scientists and researchers should build a knowledge network to advance the holistic conceptualization of a new economic paradigm that reflects the principles, drivers and values of living in harmony with nature. The UN website for harmony with nature is providing support in this direction.

The ninth report relates to cooperative measures to assess and increase awareness of environmental effects related to waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea (A/68/258). It offers a summary of views of Member States and relevant regional and international organizations as well as possible modalities for international cooperation to assess and increase awareness of this issue.

The tenth and last report describes the status of sustainable mountain development at the national and international levels. Mountains are the source of most of the Earth’s freshwater, rich in biological diversity and traditional knowledge, and popular destinations for recreation. But they are also fragile ecosystems. There is a need to ensure the ecological health and the economic and social development of mountain areas, both for those who live there and for populations in lowland areas. The report covers a wide range of initiatives and partnerships addressing sustainable mountain development issues. It puts forward recommendations on how to continue to promote development in mountain regions around the world. The report was prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in collaboration with Governments, relevant agencies of the United Nations system and other organizations.
Overall, you will agree with me that the Secretary-General’s reports provide various pieces that contribute to discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. It will be important to keep the big picture in mind as you embark on the committee’s work on sustainable development.

I thank you for your attention.